19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

and a basket of grain sold for a basket of money. He has seen the people dig unhealthy yams and suffer from eating them. In the last three statements the elder is clearly showing the effects of a great scarcity of grain, both on the price one had to pay for food and on the people who were reduced to the necessity of eating bad food. His reference to fires, floods, plagues, and massacres seem intended to suggest the causes of some of the famines that have come under his observation. Notwithstanding the importance of the subject he is dealing with, the elder addresses no exhortation to his hearers, except by implication.

The precept on indolence is full of moralizing. It condemns laziness and enjoins hard work in order to obtain paddy. It teaches the people to do their work with cheerfulness and gladness, as also thoroughly and well. "We love happiness," says the precept, "and our greatest happiness is to clear our fields and build our houses. Everything is in the earth. Work hard with the hoe to dig it out, and one can buy drums and silver and other things. It is better to work for wealth than to obtain it by raids and forays." This saying overlooks neither the spiritual nor material rewards of labor.

The precept on helping the poor, as well as those on fornication and adultery, contain references to famine, indicating that periods of extreme dearth of food must have been of frequent occurrence among the Karen. Fornication and adultery are dreadful sins because, among other reasons, they produce bad crops and scarcity of game. In times of famine the rich should help the poor, but the obligation of the former to the latter seems to stop there, so far as the sayings of the elders go. The admonition to help the poor is as follows:

"Children and grandchildren, work, every one of you, and be prepared for a time of famine. Then, when a time of scarcity or famine comes, let not the rich and those who have all the rice and paddy reject the poor who have nothing, that you may not lose your honor and be abused, but may be honored and respected. When hard times come and there is famine amongst you, let the wealthy help those who have nothing with which to buy and who can not borrow."

In a similar vein the people are urged to care for widows and orphans lest other countries, hearing of their mistreatment of their helpless ones, shall abuse them and call them poverty-stricken. Even if there are rich men among them, others will not